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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4116
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STATE FOR NP (FENSTERMACHER); EAP/MLS
USDOE FOR NNSA/NA-1 (BROOKS); NNSA/NA-20 (TOBEY, BAKER);
NNSA/NA-21 (BIENIAWSKI, CUMMINS, DICKERSON)

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [ETTC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: IAEA DG ELBARADEI'S VISIT BOOSTS VIETNAM'S NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM

REF: A) HANOI 2962 B) HANOI 2103

11. (SBU) Summary. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei visited Hanoi December 9-11 to review the Agency's cooperation with the GVN. DG ElBaradei's objectives for the visit were to promote the potential for Vietnam's nuclear power program to become a regional model, and to receive "official" notification of the GVN's recent decision to sign an Additional Protocol. In return, the GVN looked for and received a commitment to receive technical assistance from IAEA. The issue of nuclear fuel supply assurances was not mentioned during the visit, and the Director General and his interlocutors did not discuss in depth the proposed exchange of nuclear fuel at the Dalat research reactor. End Summary.

12. (SBU) During the visit, which included DG ElBaradei's meetings with representatives of the Ministries of Science and Technology (MOST), Health (MOH), Industry (MOI) and Foreign Affairs (MFA), the IAEA announced six projects for Vietnam, valued at almost USD 1.5 million. The projects, to be implemented during the period 2007-2008, cover industrial applications, nuclear analysis technology, radioactive solid waste management, improvement of the legal capacity of nuclear agencies, medical applications and related human resource development. These new projects follow-up 24 technical assistance projects on energy development, valued at USD 2.55 million, funded by the IAEA during 2001-2006. During this same period, the IAEA provided USD 1.52 million in related equipment. According to Vietnam Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety and Control (VARANSAC) Foreign Affairs Manager Le Chi Dzong, Vietnam's development of its future nuclear energy programs would not be possible without this assistance.

13. (SBU) According to VARANSAC Director General Ngo Dang Nhan, "nothing was more important" for DG ElBaradei than his mission to "officially" confirm with the GVN its decision to sign the Additional Protocol (Ref A). The GVN's intent to sign the Additional Protocol was confirmed to DG ElBaradei by Minister of Science and Technology Hoang Van Phong. At the same meeting, the IAEA chief offered to help Vietnam build a nuclear power program that will be a "model" for Southeast Asia, and requested Vietnam to strengthen the safety and security of its radioactive sources, Nhan said.

14. (SBU) The issue of nuclear fuel supply assurances was not mentioned during DG ElBaradei's visit (Ref B), Nhan continued. Regarding the proposed exchange of nuclear fuel at the Dalat research reactor, the two sides did not discuss the matter in depth. Since the GVN has already agreed to the fuel swap, DG ElBaradei merely took note of the agreement on this matter, Nhan said.

